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PROGRAMME PLANNING

Strengthening the role of evaluation findings in
programme design, delivery and policy directives

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. A general report is prepared biennially for the General Assembly on the question of programme evaluation in the United Nations. During the first part of its thirty-third session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) requested the Secretary-General "to include proposals on the phases of the evaluation process, the use of evaluation as an instrument of improving management and programme planning, and the development of achievement indicators, in the report on evaluation to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session" (see A/48/16 (Part I), para. 12). The present report contains responses to that request.

2. The central evaluation function is now operating in a new context. On 24 August 1993, the Secretary-General announced the establishment, effective 1 September 1993, of the Office for Inspections and Investigations, incorporating the Central Evaluation Unit, the Central Monitoring Unit, the Internal Audit Division and the Management Advisory Service (see ST/SGB/262). The Office is headed by an Assistant Secretary-General reporting directly to the Secretary-General. By its resolution 48/231 A, of 23 December 1993, the General Assembly transferred existing provisions for the component units to the new Office for Inspections and Investigations in its budget appropriations for the biennium 1994-1995.

II. EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

A. Studies

1. In-depth evaluations

3. In-depth evaluations are those prepared by the Central Evaluation Unit on topics recommended by CPC and endorsed by the General Assembly. Progress reports, final reports and triennial reviews of implementation are submitted to CPC.

4. The subjects of reports related to evaluation reviewed by CPC in the 1992-1993 biennium and reports to be reviewed by CPC in 1994 are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. Evaluation related reports, 1992-1994

Progress reports	Evaluation reports	Triennial reviews/ follow-up reports	Reports to the General Assembly on evaluation
1992 Social development	a/	Human rights	A/47/116
1993 United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Human settlements Human rights (follow-up report)	.
1994 Peace-keeping operations: start-up phase Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development	Social development	ECA: development issues and policies	The present report

a/ At its thirtieth session, CPC decided that no in-depth evaluation of the science and technology for development programme was required (see A/45/16, paras. 365 and 366).

2. Self-evaluation

5. Self-evaluation efforts continued during the biennium 1992-1993. Such studies were to be undertaken according to the schedule annexed to document A/47/116. The actual performance is shown in table 2. A summary of self-evaluation activities and their results is regularly presented to the intergovernmental bodies of UNHCR, UNCTAD, ECA and other units with established evaluation procedures.

6. The situation shown in table 2 is not satisfactory, even though there are a number of organizational units that have had well-functioning evaluation programmes for several years. Action concerning self-evaluation is described in section III.C below.

Table 2. Self-evaluations 1992-1993

Major programme	Number of self-evaluations			
	Self-evaluations scheduled (A/47/116, annex)	Received by the Central Evaluation Unit	Rescheduled to:	
			1994-1995	1996-1997
I. Maintenance of peace and security, disarmament and decolonization	5	-	3	2 <u>a/</u>
II. Implementation, codification and progressive development of international law	3	-	3	-
III. International cooperation for economic and social development	-	-	-	-
IV. International economic cooperation for development	18 <u>b/</u>	8 <u>c/</u>	6	4
V. International cooperation for social development	-	-	-	-
VI. Regional cooperation for economic and social development	22 <u>d/</u>	15 <u>e/</u>	4	3
VII. Human rights, fundamental freedoms and humanitarian affairs	2	-	2	-
VIII. Public information	2	2	-	-
IX. Conference services	2	-	2	-
X. Administrative services	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>59</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>10</u>

(Footnotes on following page)

(Footnotes to table 2)

a/ As a result of restructuring, two subprogrammes will be merged into one.

b/ Self-evaluation of subprogramme 4, now renumbered as 6, of programme 14 will not be undertaken owing to lack of resources.

c/ Report on subprogramme 4 of programme 22 being finalized.

d/ Including five self-evaluations programmed by ECLAC after document A/47/116 was issued.

e/ Reports on subprogrammes 7, 14, 15 and 18 of programme 30, subprogrammes 1, 2, 4, 5 and 11 of programme 33 and subprogrammes 7 and 10 of programme 34 are being finalized.

B. Development of methodology

1. Achievement indicators

7. In the in-depth evaluations undertaken by the Central Evaluation Unit over the last five years, systematic efforts have been made to apply indicators to different programmes and types of activity. The issues addressed include external users' reliance on the United Nations programme as a source of analysis and data, the quality and distribution of outputs and the level of interest in the programme by various user groups. Table 3 provides an overall picture of programmatic issues addressed and the sources of information and indicators utilized.

8. Experience with this quite extensive use of indicators, including methodological considerations on the strengths and limitations of the computerized databases utilized, has been widely shared with programme managers and evaluators in various issues of the Evaluation Bulletin. The summer 1992 issue provides guidelines on the use of "citation analysis" for assessing the extent of utilization of United Nations publications by academics and other professionals. The spring 1993 issue of the bulletin provided technical guidance on the analysis of press coverage by using the NEXIS database, as well as a description of the approach of the Department of Public Information to analysis of press coverage. A broad base of quantitative indicators for use in United Nations evaluation has thus been identified and introduced to programme managers in the United Nations and to delegations through in-depth evaluation reports. A graphical rendering of the use of one of these indicators in respect of news coverage of United Nations activities is given in figure 1 and shows the large disparity between high profile United Nations activities, such as those on human rights and refugees, and low profile activities such as those on the ageing and the disabled. The indicator used was the percentage of wire service stories on the topic which had at least one reference to the United Nations. Analysis of samples of the texts of these news stories is needed, however, before conclusions can be drawn from such data.

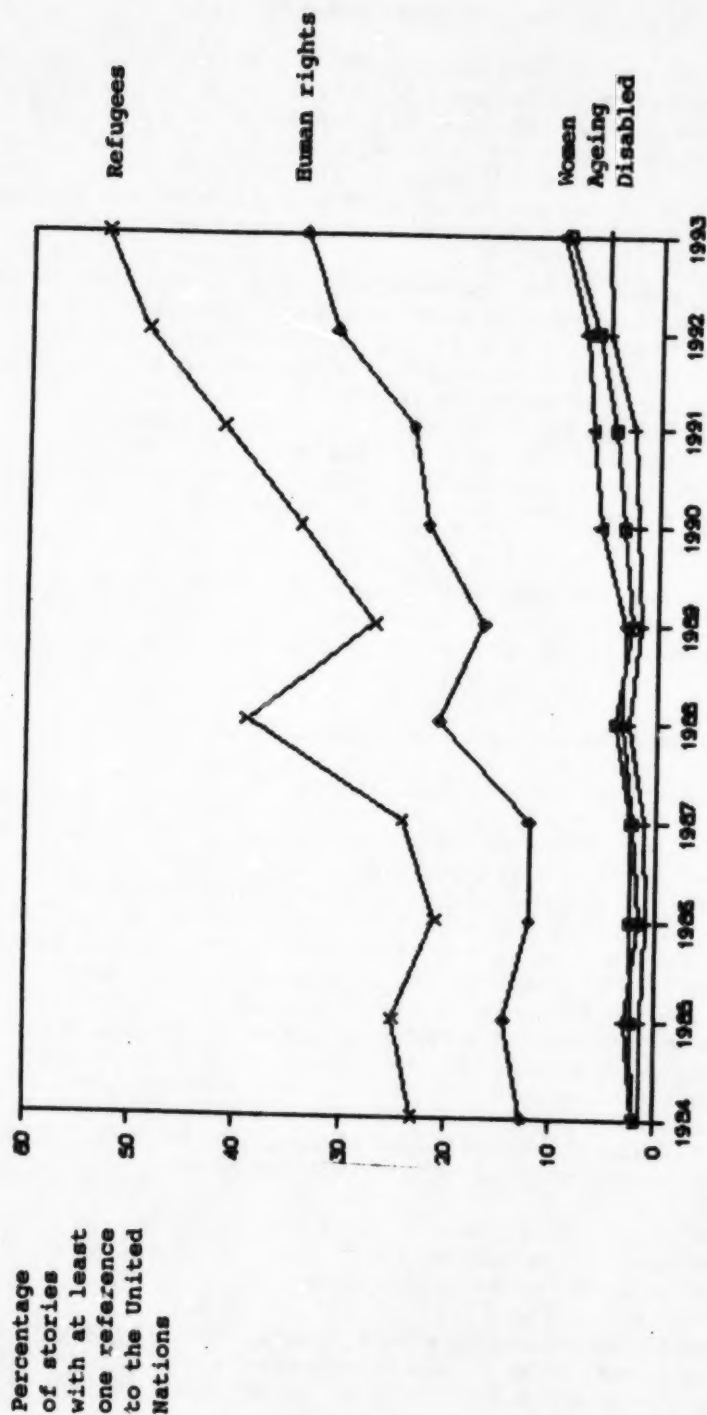
Table 3. Use of indicators in in-depth evaluations of United Nations programmes

Issue	Indicators	Sources of information	Examples shown in recent in-depth evaluation reports
1. Significance of multilateral solutions, and the United Nations role in them, for addressing problems in the programme area	Proportion of all international treaties and agreements in the area that were the result of: (a) multilateral/bilateral negotiations (b) United Nations activities (c) activities of unit being evaluated	United Nations Treaty Information System: computerized database and ST/LEG/SER.E/4	Human rights (E/AC.51/1989/2, table 3), Disarmament (E/AC.51/1989/5, tables 2-4), Disarmament (E/AC.51/1991/2, table 2)
2. Reliance on the United Nations programme as a source of analysis, data and information	Increase in number of signatories to agreements Number of items in bibliographies or citations of data and analysis in: (a) documents of other United Nations entities (b) non-United Nations published material or databases	References in reports by other United Nations entities, UNBIS/CATFILE, DIALOG/SSCI, specialized databases	Development issues and policies (E/AC.51/1989/4, tables 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 13), Disarmament (E/AC.51/1989/5, tables 5-7), Human rights (E/AC.51/1989/2, table 4), Development issues and policies (E/AC.51/1991/5, annex I, tables 1-4), Social development (E/AC.51/1992/2, table 7)

Issue	Indicators	Sources of information	Examples shown in recent in-depth evaluation reports
3. Quality of outputs and services (timeliness of data/information, services, accuracy, analytical rigour, adequacy of policy options, applicability of new concepts and methodology, objectivity, adequacy of services/information, etc.)	Number/percentage of positive/negative assessments made on quality and effectiveness of outputs and services, etc.	Responses to evaluation questionnaires (or structured interviews) by Member States, NGOs, independent researchers and non-United Nations professionals, number of citations in sources listed in item 2 above, surveys of readers	Human settlements (E/AC.51/1990/2, paras. 80-94), Human rights (E/AC.51/1989/2, table 4), Disarmament (E/AC.51/1991/2, annexes I-III, V and VI), UNHCR (E/AC.51/1993/2, paras. 41-42), Human rights (E/AC.51/1993/5, annex), Human rights (Background paper submitted to CPC)
4. Distribution of outputs	Number/percentage of targeted users, number/increase in sales, number/increase in requests for information, films, videos etc. received by UNICs, number/increase in responses by unit to requests for information, briefings, etc.	Mailing lists, OCS/Sales Section, DPI/UNICs, official distribution, unit's own records for requests for information/briefings	Development issues and policies (E/AC.51/1989/4, tables 4 and 12), Disarmament (E/AC.51/1991/2, table 4)
5. Level of interest of NGOs	Number of NGOs participating in intergovernmental meetings, number of affiliated NGOs specializing in issue addressed, number of NGO statements at meetings	Official reports of intergovernmental meetings, roster of NGOs	Human rights (E/AC.51/1989/2, para. 20), Human settlements (E/AC.51/1990/2, annex III), UNHCR (E/AC.51/1993/2, annex)

Issue	Indicators	Sources of information	Examples shown in recent in-depth evaluation reports
6. Level of press coverage	Number of references to programme or output in world newspapers, wire services, broadcasts, magazines, etc.	Press clippings, stories from newspapers, wire services and journals in NEXIS database	Human rights (E/AC.51/1989/2, table 5), Development issues and policies (E/AC.51/1989/4, tables 9 and 10), Disarmament (E/AC.51/1989/5, table 8), Disarmament (E/AC.51/1991/2, table 3 and annex IV), UNHCR (E/AC.51/1991/4, table 3), Social development (E/AC.51/1992/2, table 8), UNHCR (E/AC.51/1993/2, para. 47)
7. Level of interest of general public	Sales of publications, public inquiries, requests to UNICs (for films, TV, videos, published material, etc.), requests for group briefings	OCS/Sales Section, DPI/Programme Evaluation and Communications Research Unit, unit's own records	Human rights (E/AC.51/1989/2, table 6), Development issues and policies (E/AC.51/1989/4, table 11), Disarmament (E/AC.51/1989/5, table 9)

Figure 1. Indicators of selected United Nations activities in wire service stories



Source: E/AC.51/1991/4, table 3 updated; E/AC.51/1992/2, table 8.

2. Training and related activities

9. The Central Evaluation Unit, in collaboration with the Training Service of the Office of Human Resources Management, has developed a series of workshops on self-evaluation. Intensive one-week training workshops on evaluation have now been given at all major duty stations: three at Headquarters during 1989, one each at Bangkok (ESCAP), Geneva and Vienna, during February 1990, at Addis Ababa (ECA), in October 1990, at Santiago (ECLAC), in August 1992, and at Amman (ESCWA), in June 1993.

10. The participants in the workshops have been mainly programme managers responsible for implementing subprogrammes that were scheduled for self-evaluation. While the focus of the training workshops was on techniques for the conduct of self-evaluation, the linkage between evaluation and the programme planning cycle was also emphasized so as to draw attention to the fact that evaluation findings should be fed back into planning, programming, implementation and monitoring. The training workshops also brought to the attention of participants basic terminology, concepts and procedures for effective programme management and the need for efforts to be more result-oriented.

11. As indicated in other sections of the present report, the Evaluation Bulletin has been utilized as a method of promoting knowledge of evaluation techniques and good managerial practices throughout the Organization.

3. Evaluation as an instrument for management

(a) The conception in United Nations regulations

12. In the United Nations, the programme planning cycle begins with the formulation of the medium-term plan, which is a translation of the legislative mandates into programmes. The plan sets out the general orientation of each major programme and establishes the objectives to be achieved and the strategies to be followed. The plan serves as the framework, in the second phase of the cycle, for the formulation of the biennial programme budget, which aims at implementing the strategies in the plan. The third phase, programme monitoring, monitors the implementation of programmed activities to determine whether outputs were delivered as programmed or were postponed, reformulated or terminated, and whether new outputs were added. Evaluation, the last phase in the cycle, is required under Regulation 6.1 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation:

"(a) To determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Organization's activities in relation to their objectives;

"(b) To enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflections, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the Organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives."

Evaluation under this conception is intended to determine the extent to which a completed activity contributed to the achievement of the objectives of the medium-term plan, and the factors responsible for success or failure. It was hoped that evaluation could, by this means, identify problem areas that needed to be addressed, and also provide lessons of good practice from well-designed and well-run activities, which could be shared and used elsewhere.

13. The findings of both self-evaluation and in-depth evaluation should result in changes in programme design and budget allocations. With respect to findings of self-evaluation, the programme manager could effect required changes in resource allocation and utilization within his section or division and in the design of individual outputs. More fundamental changes would need to be proposed through established procedures as part of the preparation of the programme budget or the medium-term plan and its revisions. Those proposals would then be reviewed by the intergovernmental bodies concerned. For in-depth evaluations, the evaluation report, and the conclusions and recommendations of the CPC on it, is brought to the attention of the appropriate specialized intergovernmental body for its consideration.

(b) Evaluation in practice

14. The above conception of evaluation and its place in the United Nations programme planning cycle was developed in the mid-1970s and reflects ideas prevalent at that time. Since then, practice has forced a re-examination of older conceptions of public sector management techniques in general and of evaluation in particular.

15. In a study submitted to CPC in the spring of 1992 (E/AC.51/1992/CRP.1), attention was drawn to the limitations of traditional approaches to evaluation, which emphasized goals and objectives. In these approaches, evaluation must attempt to investigate the effects of organizational actions in a multi-causal world in which the actions of the United Nations may be only a small part of the way a national or even an international problem is addressed. The study pointed out that the professional literature on evaluation practice recorded problems with goal-based approaches in many real-life situations because organizational goals are frequently vague and ambiguous, established more for symbolic political reasons than as guides to action. In addition, there is often no clear means of measuring impact, and the attempt to do so requires considerable time and often yields unsatisfactory results. Thus, the typical criticism of traditional approaches to evaluation has been that the needs of decision makers were not met, that evaluation products were not timely and that the information produced was only marginally useful. As a result, the utilization of such evaluations was poor.

16. In response to criticisms of goal-based external evaluations, different approaches have been advocated by evaluators interested in increasing the utilization of evaluation findings. An article in the summer 1992 issue of the Evaluation Bulletin (pages 14-17), described some of the new roles of evaluators in organizations, including those of systems generalists and expert troubleshooters. Studies have shown that in practice over the last 10 to 15 years the evaluator's role has shifted away from the traditional focus on objectives to more of a problem-solving approach to evaluation.

17. In an interview in the fall 1992 issue of the Evaluation Bulletin (page 8), the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management made a number of points similar to those mentioned above. He stated that "evaluation studies should be primarily investigations into problems, issues and areas that political bodies and senior management are concerned about. This is an absolute prerequisite to effective utilization. Beyond this, senior management and intergovernmental review bodies must be seen to take the evaluation studies seriously and to be committed to bringing about changes based on their recommendations. The results of these studies should not only affect budgetary and other managerial and political decisions on the programme, but be seen to affect them as well."

18. By and large, the experience of the United Nations with evaluation has echoed that of the outside world; traditional approaches focusing on objectives have often yielded only minor insights because the objectives were too vague. The analysis required for an evaluation of either effectiveness or impact must be done in practice mainly by collecting opinions through questionnaires. This technique is time-consuming. The results are usually ambiguous. In the case of results relying on questionnaires, the conclusions are based on the small and unscientific sample of those who, after reminders, actually respond. The problem-oriented approach utilized in the report on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) last year, which was supported by results from questionnaires but not based on them, yielded many practical recommendations. The CPC "commended the Secretariat for the excellent quality of the report" (A/48/16, Part I, para. 27). A similar approach has been adopted for the evaluation of the start-up phase of peace-keeping operations. Both these reports attempt to focus on the practical concerns of managers and policy decision makers rather than investigate effects in relation to objectives.

19. A problem-oriented managerial approach to evaluation has also been taken in many articles in the Evaluation Bulletin. In the 1992-1993 biennium there have been articles on managerial issues that have been highlighted by in-depth evaluations such as:

- (a) Raising user awareness of United Nations publications;
- (b) Reaching users by use of customized mailing lists;
- (c) Using electronic networks for information exchange;
- (d) The role of NGOs in United Nations programmes.

20. Perhaps the main lesson to learn from the experience with evaluation in the United Nations is that there should be no rigid conception of what an evaluation should do or of what methodologies should be used. Different programmes should be expected to require very different approaches and methodologies for their evaluation. A practical problem-oriented approach, if feasible, is the most likely to yield usable results. The CPC request to the Secretariat in 1993 to evaluate the "start-up phase" of peace-keeping, by focusing the evaluation on a problem of concern to Member States, is probably a good model to follow whenever possible.

4. Phases of the in-depth evaluation process

21. An in-depth evaluation usually follows a six year cycle. Following the selection by CPC of the programme to be evaluated, the first phase involves the preparation by the Central Evaluation Unit and submission to CPC of a Progress report which includes preliminary findings based on available information and proposals for the scope, methodology and issues to be addressed in the final report. Usually the time taken for this basic study is one year. After CPC has decided on the scope of the evaluation and the issues to be addressed and, in the case of questionnaires to Member States, aspects of the methodology as well, a two-year period is usually required to undertake the in-depth study and to prepare and submit to CPC the final in-depth evaluation report. Three years after CPC has made recommendations based on the final report, a triennial review is conducted to assess progress in the implementation of the recommendations of CPC. In some cases further follow-up reports may be requested by CPC. CPC has, however, occasionally found the progress report sufficient for its needs, as was the case with the reports on science and technology in 1990 and on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) last year. The two progress reports submitted to CPC this year contain findings and related recommendations, along with proposals for further study. The cycle for in-depth evaluations could be shortened by two years by eliminating the progress report phase.

III. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF EVALUATION

A. Office for Inspections and Investigations

22. As pointed out in the introduction to the present report, the central evaluation function is now operating as part of the Office for Inspections and Investigations, which has the responsibility of providing comprehensive audit, inspection and investigation services to the Organization (see ST/SGB/268). To carry out its functions, the Office is at present being organized to include an Audit and Management Control Division, a Central Inspection and Monitoring Unit, an Investigation Unit and a Central Evaluation Unit. Evaluation is thus being conducted in a new context, in which programme performance and self-evaluation can be reviewed together as part of comprehensive inspections of organizational units.

23. This action of consolidating the oversight functions of the Organization in the new office has led to three changes that have strengthened the central evaluation and programme monitoring functions. There has been a reduction in the hierarchical lines of communication. The Central Monitoring Unit and the Central Evaluation Unit were previously in the Programme Planning and Budget Division. This meant that the chiefs of those units reported to the Director of the Budget who, in turn, reported to the Controller who, in turn, reported to the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management who, in turn, reported to the Secretary-General. Each of these intermediary senior officials had a large range of competing claims on their attention and a large range of managerial responsibilities other than the supervision of oversight functions. The new Office reports directly to the Secretary-General so that the line of communication between those responsible for oversight functions and the Chief

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Administrative Officer of the Organization has been drastically shortened. In addition, and even more important than this, the head of the Office has no competing claims on his attention; his full attention can be devoted to the oversight functions of the Organization and their problems, and the problems that they uncover. The second effect of consolidating oversight functions concerns the Internal Audit Division's investigatory powers. With their merger into the new Office, these powers have now in effect been granted to all units in the Office.

B. In-depth evaluations

24. A risk analysis for evaluation activities has been undertaken using an assessment instrument also used as a guide for audit, monitoring and inspection activities. The application of this instrument can help ensure an integrated approach to all oversight functions. The assessment was applied to a "universe" consisting of all activities under the responsibility of the Secretary-General. Each budget section in this universe was scored against standard criteria for the risk factors. Sections that were considered as more risky, or that had not been recently subject to oversight review, were rated higher than those of less risk.

25. The model used three factors: "size", "visibility" and "previous findings". The size factor measures potential risk by the volume of financial resources controlled. The visibility factor measures political aspects of risk, and the previous findings factor reflects either the lack of prior assessment or the extent of difficulties.

26. The programmes with very high ratings were:

- (a) Peace-keeping operations and special missions;
- (b) Environment and human settlements;
- (c) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
- (d) United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East;
- (e) Department for Humanitarian Affairs;
- (f) Public Information.

27. Peace-keeping operations and special missions. This section scored high on all three factors. It is the subject of an in-depth evaluation report (E/AC.51/1994/3) to be submitted to CPC this year at its thirty-fourth session. The report contains recommendations for improvement in the ability of the United Nations to learn from its experience in peace-keeping and to develop a ready capacity to act for the electoral, information, human rights, civilian police and military components of complex missions. The report also recommends that overall direction and coordination and the humanitarian component, as well as support functions such as the planning, financing, personnel, logistics,

procurement and training aspects, of United Nations peace-keeping operations be addressed in a follow-up study to be conducted during the last half of 1994 and reviewed by CPC in the spring of 1995. The report also suggests that other aspects of peace-keeping, beyond the start-up phase, could be evaluated.

28. Environment and human settlements. This section has a high volume of resources, and is assessed as having medium-level visibility; the environment component lacks any previous evaluation review. The triennial review of the in-depth evaluation of human settlements (E/AC.51/1993/4) was examined by CPC in 1993; the Committee endorsed the recommendations put forward by the triennial review (A/48/16, Part I, para. 19). CPC has tentatively listed environment for in-depth evaluation in 1997, with a progress report due in 1995 (see A/48/16, Part I, para. 35). A final decision on this subject will be made by CPC at the first part of its thirty-fourth session.

29. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. This section scored high on the resource and visibility factors. It was the subject of a recent in-depth evaluation (E/AC.51/1993/2), which was submitted to the Executive Committee of UNHCR in October 1993, together with the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on it (A/48/16, Part I, paras. 25 and 26). A triennial review will be conducted in 1996, and intermediate reviews of compliance in 1994 and 1995.

30. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. This section scored high on both resources and visibility. It was the subject of a progress report (E/AC.51/1993/3) in 1993. CPC reviewed the report, noted that it met the requirements set for it and decided that no further action in respect of the in-depth evaluation of UNRWA was necessary (A/48/16, Part I, para. 23). The nature of UNRWA's activities is undergoing a significant transformation as a result of changes in the middle eastern political environment.

31. Department of Humanitarian Affairs. This section scored high on visibility and lacks previous review. There is also significant interest by Member States in humanitarian issues and operations and their relation to peace-keeping operations. CPC tentatively listed the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for in-depth evaluation in 1997, with a progress report due in 1995 (A/48/16, Part I, para. 35). A final decision on this subject will be made by CPC at the first part of its thirty-fourth session.

32. Public information. This section scores high on visibility. The last in-depth evaluation of this programme was reviewed by CPC in 1983, with a triennial review in 1986 and a follow-up report in 1988. An effective public information programme is a significant aspect of all United Nations activities and an important prerequisite for the success of high profile operations. A negative public perception also detracts from the general effectiveness of the Organization. Consequently, the Department of Public Information is potentially an important focus for evaluation but is not currently scheduled for in-depth evaluation.

33. It will be recalled that the Secretariat submitted to CPC at the first part of its thirty-third session a note on topics for future in-depth evaluations

(E/AC.51/1993/6). CPC recommended to the General Assembly (A/48/16, Part I, para. 35) that the following programmes be subjected to in-depth evaluations, scheduled as follows:

1994: Social development

1995: Peace-keeping operations: start-up phase

1996: Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development

1997: Department of Humanitarian Affairs or environment

The 1994 progress report on Africa: critical economic situation recovery and development, proposes that the final report, due in 1996, have a system-wide coverage and be conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) (E/AC.51/1994/4, para. 44).

34. In the note on topics for future in-depth evaluations, the Secretariat also recommended two other areas for in-depth evaluation for subsequent years:

(a) International law, in particular the subprogrammes on the progressive development and codification of international law, and on the progressive harmonization and unification of the law of international trade (1998);

(b) Statistics, consisting of the subprogrammes on developing statistical concepts and methods for use by Member States, on applying advanced technology in collecting, processing and disseminating integrated statistics, on collecting, compiling and disseminating international statistics and on coordinating international statistical programmes (1999).

C. Self-evaluation and performance monitoring

35. To date, six programme performance reports have been prepared within the framework of Regulations 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning. The first purpose of these reports was to determine the degree of implementation of the activities indicated in the programme budget, by comparing the number of outputs programmed with those implemented. The second purpose was to explain the changes and modifications which occurred during the implementation, reflect their magnitude and indicate the respective roles of the Secretariat and legislative bodies in influencing these changes.

36. Since the inception of the exercise, CPC has regularly called for improvements in reporting programme performance. While over the years the reporting has indeed improved in terms of its coverage and the details provided, it has still fallen short of addressing the two basic concerns of Member States. The first relates to the imperfect method of measuring implementation by comparing the number of outputs programmed with the number of those implemented, treating equally outputs that are very different in terms of their call on resources and their relative importance to the objectives of the programme. The second concern which Member States have been expressing relates to the quantitative and rather descriptive nature of the reports and the absence of

analysis of the results which the activities implemented had achieved throughout the biennium under consideration.

37. Two main obstacles have made it difficult to address these shortcomings. First and foremost is the programme budget itself, which has been conceived and formulated in terms of outputs and services to be delivered, with some indicative information on resources at the subprogramme level but without reference to any expected outcome at the end of the biennium. This formulation has been dictated by considerations of practicality. The second obstacle is that the concepts of monitoring and self-evaluation have not been generally perceived by programme managers as essential management tools for enhancing the economy and efficiency of implementation and assessing the results achieved. Consequently, reporting on programme performance has been undertaken against a limited frame of reference which does not facilitate a more meaningful measurement of implementation or an analysis of performance.

38. In the circumstances, a fresh approach is needed. The monitoring function in each organizational unit should be conceived as part of an internal oversight mechanism responsible for the efficiency and effectiveness of programme performance. To meet this end, a proper system of information gathering for oversight purposes must be established. The information gathered should be of a qualitative as well as a quantitative nature to enable analytical assessment of performance and results achieved. Such information is essential for managerial and reporting purposes. The setting up of such a system requires combining, in one single function, the existing data gathering exercise for reporting programme implementation with the self-evaluation exercise.

39. The idea of utilizing the findings generated by the self-evaluation system in the programme performance report is not new. A similar proposal was made by JIU in its report entitled "Reporting on the performance and results of United Nations programmes: monitoring, evaluation and management review components" (A/43/124, sect.1). This was followed by a report of the Secretary-General on the matter (A/44/233) outlining the difficulties and limitations of utilizing the self-evaluation findings in reporting performance. These difficulties centred around the timely availability of the necessary information and the coverage of the self-evaluation exercise. These difficulties are inherent in the exercise as it has been conducted to date. It would seem necessary, therefore, gradually to transform the self-evaluation exercise into a performance evaluation function that generates data and analytical information on a routine and comprehensive basis for the purpose of providing management with the means to assess the success of the various activities implemented during the biennium, determine the relevancy of their outcome to the objectives and contribute to a system of accountability. As shown in table 3 above, there are many indicators that can be utilized as part of self-evaluation and management oversight systems in the United Nations. Once readily available in each organizational unit, such information would become an integral part of central performance reporting to Member States.

40. In the light of the above, the role of the Central Monitoring Unit has been strengthened by incorporating it within a broad inspection function in the context of the overall responsibility of the Office for Inspections and Investigations. The new Central Inspection and Monitoring Unit will continue to

assume the responsibilities prescribed in Regulations 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning. In addition, it will develop guidelines for overseeing programme preparation, monitoring implementation and assessing performance. It will regularly inspect and monitor the implementation of these guidelines to review how programme managers, throughout the Organization, collect and assemble information on their respective programmes in order to keep apprised of progress, analyse performance, enhance the economy and efficiency of implementation and establish adequate accountability systems.

41. The Unit will also conduct ad-hoc inspections of programmes and organizational units where there are good reasons to believe that programme oversight is ineffective and the potential for a wasteful utilization of resources is great.

42. The annex to the previous report on strengthening the evaluation function (A/47/116) contained a detailed schedule of self-evaluations for the 1992-1997 medium-term plan period. This schedule and the overall approach to self-evaluation will need to be adjusted as the new procedures merging self-evaluation and monitoring are developed.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

43. Recommendation 1, in-depth evaluation cycle: The current evaluation cycle should be shortened. The first phase of the cycle should result in an evaluation review report containing findings and recommendations. If necessary, proposals for a follow-up evaluation report would be made in the review report for consideration by CPC. The triennial review should be replaced by the annual compliance reviews contained in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the work of the Office for Inspections and Investigations. More detailed compliance reports could still be undertaken by the Central Evaluation Unit, at the request of CPC.

44. Recommendation 2, schedule of in-depth evaluations: CPC may wish to recommend to the General Assembly that in-depth evaluations be undertaken as follows:

- 1995: Peace-keeping operations: start-up phase (Part II);
Department of Humanitarian Affairs;
- 1996: Department of Public Information;
Peace-keeping operations: termination phase and link to
development;
- 1997: Environment
Statistics

45. Recommendation 3, performance evaluation: Monitoring and self-evaluation should be viewed as an integral part of the managerial oversight responsibility, which requires the generation, on a routine basis, of data and analytical information on implementation and results achieved, including the use of

achievement indicators where appropriate. General guidelines on the managerial oversight function, including methods for data collection and information gathering and their coverage, will be prepared centrally for the guidance of programme managers.
